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THE NEED FOR AN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION CENTER. AN INTERIM REPORT TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ADULT BASIC EDUCATION.

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DESCRIPTORS- *ADULT BASIC EDUCATION, *FUNCTIONAL ILLITERACY, *ORGANIZATION, *RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTERS, *INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS CENTERS, FEDERAL AID, FEDERAL LEGISLATION, STATE PROGRAMS, MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT, SYRACUSE, NEW YORK STATE,

THE NEED FOR AN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION CENTER IS ILLUSTRATED BY STATISTICS ON ILLITERACY IN THE UNITED STATES FROM THE 1960 CENSUS. ELEVEN PERCENT OF ADULTS WERE FUNCTIONALLY ILLITERATE AND NEARLY 2.3 MILLION HAD NEVER BEEN ENROLLED IN A SCHOOL. CONCERN TO ERADICATE ILLITERACY IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD IS SHOWN IN UNESCO'S RESOLUTION AND AMERICA'S PRIVATE AND GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR THE CAUSE. WITHIN THE UNITED STATES, HOWEVER, ONLY A SPORADIC ATTACK HAD BEEN MADE ON UNDEREDUCATION UNTIL THE MID 1960S. CONGRESSIONAL ACTS HAVE PROVIDED FOR ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND SEVERAL STATES HAVE SET UP PROGRAMS. THERE IS URGENCY FOR SPECIAL LITERACY MATERIALS AND THERE SHOULD BE COOPERATION BETWEEN PUBLISHERS AND SCHOOL SYSTEMS. THE OFFICE OF EDUCATION HAS RECOGNIZED THE NEED FOR A CENTER TO DEVELOP AND DISTRIBUTE MATERIALS AND IS CONSIDERING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION CENTERS. THE PROPOSED CENTER IN SYRACUSE, NEW YORK, COULD CARRY OUT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND COLLECT AND DISTRIBUTE EXISTING MATERIALS. IT COULD WORK CLOSELY WITH EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AGENCIES IN THE COMMUNITY AND COORDINATE THEIR ACTIVITIES WITH THOSE OF OTHER AGENCIES IN THE STATE AND COUNTRY. (RT)

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BY

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OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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Cap 2 ?

THE NEED FOR AN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION CENTER

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An Interim Report to the
Advisory Committee on Adult Basic Education

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THE NEED FOR AN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION CENTER

CONTENTS

		Page
	Introduction	iii
I.	The Need for Adult Basic Education	1
II.	Programs in Other Countries	6
III.	Programs in the United States	13
IV.	The Need for Adult Basic Education Materials	23
V.	Adult Basic Education Development and Distribution Center	31
VI.	Conclusion	36

INTRODUCTION

For some time consideration has been given to the establishment of an adult basic education center in Syracuse. The plan was given impetus in December, 1966, when ECCO sponsored a one-day conference on adult basic education for the purpose of exploring the possibilities of a curriculum materials development center. During the conference, the plan was expanded by a consideration of the international involvement of basic education programs. The conference considered the answers to the questions:

1. Is it desirable to establish a clearinghouse for materials being published for basic education which would both collect and evaluate materials?

2. Could the center conduct research in the development and field testing of standardized tests which may be used specifically for adult illiterates?

3. Could the center become involved in international literacy programs if the need presents itself?

The conferees reached two conclusions:

1. That the group attending the conference form an advisory council for this project and any other projects in adult basic education undertaken by ECCO.

2. That ECCO make application to the proper authorities for a special grant to draw up plans for a center. To do this, the conferees felt, would require the conduct of a full-scale survey of current programs in basic education in the suggested program areas.

This study is the result of the recommendation of the conferees. It is not final for it is based upon a limited set of observations and is in a continuing state of revision. It may help, however, to give direction to the advisory committee in its further deliberations.

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THE NEED FOR AN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION CENTER

I. The Need for Adult Basic Education

A. Scope of Illiteracy

It has been known for a long time that illiteracy is prevalent in some parts of the world. Children learn about illiteracy in Africa and Asia through Social Studies classes. Newspaper readers encounter stories about it. Television viewers watch programs dramatizing the problem. Educational researchers worry about its tremendous scope. Travelers experience its results. It has been estimated that 700,000,000 people, half of the world's adult population, have never attended school; 75% of these live in Asia, 15% in Africa, 4% in Europe and 6% in North and South America.[1] Table I illustrates this point dramatically.

The United States has one of the most advanced and democratic public school systems known. Presumably the products of this system should be among the most literate anywhere. The 1960 census, however, with newly inserted questions concerning education, startled the population of the United States into facing up to a new view of itself. The analysis of the answers to the question, "How many years did you attend school?" made even the computer blink.

Ten million adults, 11% of the adult population of the United States, were in

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[1] Paul C. Berg, "Illiteracy at the Crossroads", in Frank W. Lanning and Wesley A. Many, Basic Education for Disadvantaged Adults, (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1966), p. 47.

TABLE I

Percentage of Illiterates Among Adults, Aged 15 Years and Over

	1950	1960
Africa[1]	80-85%	78-83%
America	21-25	18-20
Asia and Oceania[2]	67-71	53-57
Arab Countries	82-87	79-83
Europe and USSR	6-10	3-7
	40-45%	38-43%

[1]Excluding South Africa

[2]Excluding China, North Korea and North Vietnam

Ref: Floyd Shacklock, World Literacy Manual, (New York: Committee on World Literacy and Christian Literature, 1967), p. 6.

reality, functional illiterates.[2] Technically, according to the Bureau of Census definition, a functional illiterate is any person, aged 25 or over, who has not gone beyond the fifth grade.[3] A valid working definition, however, is a person who cannot hold a job because he lacks the necessary educational and technical skills, who, for example, cannot read signs or write his name.

Of the ten million functional illiterates identified, 2,299,000 had never been

[2]Ibid., p. 48.

[3]Ibid., p. 47.

enrolled in school.[4] If we add several throusands more to that number to up-date the figures, we can change the verb from past tense to present tense.

Even these disturbing 1960 census figures do not tell the whole story. People not only do not tell the whole truth about themselves, they do not know the whole truth. When interviewed about their education, individuals tended to guess at a higher level rather than a lower level for the time spent in school. Many left because their reading level was lower than average. Since 1960 several more millions of Americans have left school for a variety of reasons and many more millions will leave unless drastic efforts are made to reverse the trend. A conservative estimate for the future is that by 1970, 15,000,000 Americans will be technologically unemployable.[5] Table II shows the numbers of functional illiterates in some same states.

TABLE II

Census Figures for Functionally Illiterates and Enrollment in Public School ABE Classes

	Age 18-25 Non-High School Graduate	Age 25 & Over Fifth Grade or Less	Enrolled in ABE Classes
New York	6,473,000	775,000	19,303
California	4,795,000	505,000	9,899
Pennsylvania	4,403,000	453,000	9,833
Illinois	3,766,000	365,400	16,718
Texas	3,454,000	672,000	76,442

(continued)

[4] Ibid., p. 47

[5] Ibid., p. 48

	Age 18-25 Non-High School Graduate	Age 25 & Over Fifth Grade or Less	Enrolled in ABE Classes
Ohio	3,437,000	292,400	9,522
N. Carolina	2,448,000	380,100	47,000
Florida	1,832,000	261,400	39,231
Kentucky	1,317,000	225,500	23,770
S. Carolina	930,700	230,800	25,952

Ref: NAPSE Almanac of Adult Education, 1967.

B. Targets for Training

Byron Chapman, Director of the Mott Foundation, has suggested that one-fourth of the population of the United States is undereducated since many of them are unable to read want ads and to understand and fill out job applications, let alone grasp the complexities of the news. Chapman reports further that in 1910 about 30% of the job market could be filled by unskilled labor; today less than 3% can be filled by a person who does not hold a high school diploma. The corollary to this is that four-fifths of the nation's unemployed are functionally illiterate.[6] Mr. Chapman has also pointed out that an average community spends approximately $3,300 annually to support a functional illiterate on welfare. The cost of educating the same person for one year ranges from $280 in Mississippi to $600 in New York.[7]

George Aker, Professor of Education, Florida State University, suggests that the target should be fifteen million functional illiterates in the United States, a

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[6]Byron Chapman, talk to Literacy Volunteers, Syracuse, N.Y., Feb. 27, 1967, (Author's Notes).

[7]Ibid.

figure somewhat lower than that suggested by Chapman but higher than that suggested by the United States Office of Education.[8] This figure, Aker suggests, represents the number of persons who are to become functionally literate and attain a cognitive affective level wherein learning becomes self-perpetuating. Aker states, "If we embark on a plan of substantially reducing or eliminating the problem, by the year 1975 we can achieve our goal by helping an average of 2,500,000 functional illiterates raise themselves to the level of functional literacy each year for ten years".[9]

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[8]George F. Aker, "Strategies of Leadership for Adult Basic Education," working paper for conference at George Washington University, sponsored by the United States Office of Education, September 1966, p. 3, (Mimeographed).

[9]Ibid.

II. Programs in Other Countries

A. Private Organizations

Several American organizations are concerned with illiteracy in other parts of the world. These include:

Laubach Literacy Fund, Inc., Syracuse N.Y.

A non-profit educational organization created to promote an awareness of illiteracy abroad as well as in the United States. The Laubach Literacy Fund works with other agencies in guiding programs of literacy teaching, writing for illiterates, teacher and tutor training and helps to upgrade professional literacy training at the college and university levels. It has been involved in a number of literacy programs in Latin America, Africa and Asia using the latest teaching methods and materials. Its professional staff combine teaching methods which include all existing media such as comic books, newspapers, radio and television. It has conducted research and has developed basal readers in 311 languages.

Koinonia Foundation, Baltimore, Md.

A private non-profit educational foundation organized to train Christian lay teachers to serve overseas in several different fields, including literacy training. The Foundation offers teacher training programs and has many graduates serving overseas in literacy programs, notably in Liberia. It offers courses in developing teaching materials for teachers and students.

Committee on World Literacy and Christian Literature

An agency of the World Council of Churches, the committee represents most North American churches which cooperate in their overseas programs of literacy and literature. The Committee has prepared primers and other materials in many languages and is conducting research into more effective methods and materials. The Committee uses the "two stream plan", that is, books of a distinctly religious and devotional nature as well as materials which serve the needs of human welfare and of nation-building. The member churches are now joining other non-governmental agencies to cooperate with the government and with UNESCO in the World Literacy Campaign.

B. United States Government

International Education Act of 1966

The 89th Congress passed the International Education Act of 1966. Section II of the act stated

> It is both necessary and appropriate for the Federal Government to assist in the development of resources for international study and research, to assist in the development of resources and trained personnel in academic and professional fields....

Section 101, in discussing centers for advanced international studies, authorized grants to institutions of higher learning, or combinations of such institutions, for the establishment and operation of graduate centers,

> which will be national and international resources for research and training in international studies and the international aspects of professional and other fields of study. Activities carried on in such centers may be concentrated either on specific geographical areas of the world or on particular fields or issues in world affairs which concern one or more countries....

Senator Wayne Morse, in supporting the bill, stated

> The President recognizes the importance of our dealing with an international education program, first by providing support for our graduate and undergraduate institutions here in this country, and for developing the programs, the curriculums and the personnel necessary to make it possible for us to attack the major problems we face in the field of education abroad.

He added,

> The President pointed out the direct relationship between peace and literacy... Out of literacy will come that support for the programs that are necessary to improve the economic standards of the masses of the people of the world.[10]

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[10] Education for World Affairs, Report, November 1966.

UNESCO

The United States government is supporting the UNESCO literacy program through its contributions to UNESCO and the UN Development Program and through the Department of State's Cultural Division which cooperates on a professional basis.

AID

Over the years the Agency for International Development (AID) has assisted various national literacy programs through the functioning of its educational officers stationed abroad. AID provided financial and technical assistance to the Turkish Ministry of Education in planning a literacy program in 1957, for example.

AID also organized a 1964 work conference on world literacy which was concerned with the problems of how to respond constructively to the many requests for guidance which it receives. This conference resulted in an AID project now being conducted in Northeast Brazil in cooperation with the Committee for World Literacy. The Committee, supported by AID, is working with a teacher's college to provide literacy programs and at the same time measure the effectiveness of various media such as books, comic books, television and radio, in literacy programs.

Peace Corps

The Peace Corps is another agency which is concerned, in part, with developing literacy materials for citizens in underdeveloped countries. In Columbia, the Peace Corps and AID, have been cooperating with the Ministry of Education

in a large educational television program. Now approximately 250,000 children in seven Columbian states are receiving instruction via television. During 1966 televised literacy classes were produced and experiemental classes used in one state.[11]

C. UNESCO

In December 1963, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution to

> explore ways and means of supporting national efforts for the eradication of illiteracy through a world campaign and other measures... of international cooperation and assistance, both financial and non-financial....

Sixty-eight delegations attended the World Congress of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy which was held in Iran in September of 1965. From this congress grew the policy of setting up UNESCO pilot projects as well as the establishment of government sponsored projects for the elimination of illiteracy. UNESCO's approach has shifted from its initial program of intensive literacy training in many villages to a concentration on campaigns of financial assistance to a few carefully selected regions which demonstrate a promising potential for an overall improvement in their standard of living. Literacy programs are carefully coordinated with economic development programs and students and teachers are trained simultaneously.

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[11]Letter from Irving Pearson, Laubach Literacy Fund, April 30, 1967.

Dr. Homer Kempfer, Director of UNESCO's Literacy Division, reports

> These projects have been approved: Algeria, Ecuador, Guinea, Iran, Tanzania, and Mali. The next two we hope will be Sudan and Ethiopia. We hope this number can increase materially within the next two or three years....
>
> UNESCO expects to help Iran establish an international center for literacy methods this year. In addition to ASFEC in Egypt and CREFAL in Mexico, which are oriented somewhat to literacy, we are also establishing centers in Ecuador, Venezuela, Ibadan and Nairobi to serve special purposes....It is also our hope that during 1968 they can hold four high level seminars or workshops for the training of top people in materials in each of the four regions of the world: Latin America, Africa, United States and Asia.[12]

UNESCO's Director-General's report of June 1966 gives the following highlights of other literacy activity

> A working group of six evaluation experts met...to study the "Provisional Guide for the Evaluation of Experimental Literacy Programmes" drafted by the Secretariat. Following the group's study and comments by specialists the final version of the Guide will be used for the evaluation of experimental literacy projects and certain national literacy programs.
>
> The Regional Conference on the Planning and Organization of Literacy Programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Caracas and was attended by representatives of 20 member states....
>
> Two seminars for adult literacy planners were organized for African and Asian countries...[13]

D. National Governments

Literacy programs being carried out by national governments are varied in depth and scope. External guidance and assistance ranged from Peace Corps

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[13] Report by the Director-General of UNESCO on the Activities of the Organization, 1 January - 30 June 1966 (Paris, August 1966).

to the establishment of sophisticated research centers staffed and advised by foreign experts.

UNESCO studied the various national programs before launching its World Literacy Campaign. Some of its findings are especially pertinent:[14]

1. In at least half of the countries studied the Ministries of Education are responsible for the action to promote literacy, sometimes through activity of a special body and often through cooperation with other ministries or regional and local authorities; the financial burden also may be shared.

2. The cooperating agencies include the Ministries of Social Affairs, Labor, Justice and Police, Development and Army. In many countries a special department is set up.

3. The active part played by private initiative cannot be underestimated and more than 30 countries refer to it. The responsibility of governmental authority for financial support may be affected by private or public action.

4. Forty-seven countries, approximately 76% of those with serious problems of illiteracy, reported they were planning action.

5. It appears that literacy plans are sometimes drawn up in isolation, but such plans often form a part of a larger program of popular culture, a general program of education or even of economic and social development.

6. Countries reporting no illiteracy include Japan, New Zealand, Greece, the USSR, the Ukraine and Byelorussia.

7. Iran's literacy program provides a good example of a constructive program. This program consits of a five-year plan to promote literacy for 300,000 adults in six-month stages and is financed by the Ministry of Education and the Plan Organization. Iran started a Literacy Corps in 1965 made up of high

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[14]UNESCO and International Bureau of Education, Literacy and Education for Adults, and supplement (Paris and Geneva, 1964, 1965).

school graduates who were given a choice of becoming village teachers or being drafted. Iran anticipated that by 1967, 35,000 helpers would be serving in Iranian villages for 14 months each. In addition more one room school houses were built by Iranian villagers in the period of 1963-1965 than during the previous history of the Ministry of Education.

8. A Jordanian act, passed in 1964, encouraged voluntary literacy activity but did not provide an organized national program.

9. Senegal reported continuing results from a 1918 decree in addition to a UNESCO project which set up twelve literacy centers as part of the 1966 program. Responsibility for the program rested with the Ministry of Education and Culture, with Popular Education, Youth and Sports, Technical Education and Staff Training, Armed Forces, Planning and Development, and Health and Social Affairs as collaborators. During holidays, student volunteer literacy programs were supplemented by popular and civic educational activities.

10. Ghana's organized literacy campaign dates back to 1952. In that year 1,669 classes in 576 villages enrolled over 35,000 students. The program is conducted by public and private agencies with UNESCO support and is part of the overall community development program.[15]

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[15]Peter du Sautey, Community Development in Ghana, (London: Oxford University Press, 1958).

III. Programs in the United States

A. United States Government Programs

Although no federal money had been appropriated for non-vocational education in 1962, by January, 1964, the United States Office of Education estimated that at least $190,000,000 of federal monies was available to the directors of public school educational programs. Much of this money was intended for the elimination of adult illiteracy. Robert Luke of NAPSAE comments that basic education has been encouraged under a variety of congressional appropriations. "What has been a sporadic attack on undereducation throughout the years", he writes, "will now become a determined national effort, with sufficient federal funds used to stimulate more adequate state and local appropriations."[16]

In 1961 the federal government began the development of a job retraining program which was authorized by Congress under the Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962. Experience demonstrated, however, that many potential candidates for the program could neither read nor write well enough to profit from the program. In West Virginia, for example, only one-half of the candidates could start and in Connecticut 97 out of 100 students could not finish. The MDTA was then amended to provide for the development of adult basic education programs.

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[16]Robert S. Luke, "The Sign of Revolution in Public School Education," in Lanning and Many, op. cit., p. 363

The passage of the Economic Opportunity Act in 1965 provided an additional impetus to adult education. In 1966, the responsibility for literacy programs was shifted to the Office of Education in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Congress then passed Public Law 89-750, known as the "Elementary and Secondary Education Amendments of 1966", which includes provisions for basic adult education.

Title III of PL 89-750 provides:

> Section 302. It is the purpose of this title to encourage and expand basic education programs to adults to enable them to overcome English language limitations, to improve their basic education in preparation for occupational training and more profitable employment, and to become more productive and responsible citizens.
>
> Section 306. Any state desiring to receive its allotment of federal funds for any grant under this title...shall...
>
> (4) Provide for grants to public and private non-profit agencies for special projects, teacher training and research;
>
> (5) Provide for cooperation with Community Action programs, work experience programs, VISTA, work-study and other programs relating to the Anti-Poverty Act.

B. State Education Department Programs

Replies from several states to a survey conducted by the Educational and Cultural Center serving Onondaga and Oswego Counties (ECCO) are illustrative of the types of programs presently in operation in the United States.

Ohio

The Department of Education of Ohio describes its adult basic education program as having five purposes:[17]

> 1. To provide funds to local school districts for the initiation of programs of instruction for individuals who have attained age 18 and whose inability to read and write the English language constitutes a substantial impairment to their ability to meet their adult responsibilities.
>
> 2. To establish, organize, and coordinate projects within the State of Ohio for experimentation and demonstration purposes in basic education for adults and the in-service education of instructors and other necessary staff.
>
> 3. To provide proper and sufficient consultative services at the state level for the evaluation of programs which seek to improve the quality of instruction.
>
> 4. To provide operational policies for programs in adult basic education.
>
> 5. To be a part of the coordinated efforts of all public and private agencies and organizations that are mobilized under the Act in order to launch a comprehensive program that will make definite progress toward the elimination of poverty.

The initial grant received was for $702,639. Twenty-five projects were funded by the state in 18 counties and enrolled 7,297 students with ages ranging from 18 to 97 years and a median age of 38. Eighteen percent of the students reported less than three years of schooling while 17% had more than eight years of education but functioned at a lower level. The minimum course of instruction was 150 hours of basic literacy training. Evaluation and assessment of the programs was included.

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[17] State of Ohio, Department of Education, Guidelines for Planning an Adult Basic Education Program and for the Preparation of Proposals, 1966.

The Department of Education reported:[18]

> The cooperation of outside agencies was thought to be essential to the operation of successful adult basic education programs... Good relations between business, industry, community agencies and the school are vital. The Community Action Program was, according to one director, 'the sparkplug and ramrod of the operation'. Cooperating agencies included YMCA, YWCA, churches, metropolitan housing authorities, the Salvation Army, Volunteers for America, Goodwill, county welfare agencies, state employment service, Urban League and public school personnel.

California:

The California plan for adult basic education lists two objectives:[19]

> 1. Short Term Plan - To launch a major effort in the reduction of adult inability to read, write and compute at eighth grade levels requires not only the introduction of additional classes but the development of up-to-date, innovative methods of instruction. If the results of federal aid are to be meaningful in later years, the early efforts in this program must be directed toward the development of highly efficient programs of education and entirely new approaches to recruitment and retention of adults in the lowest income group...
>
> 2. Long Term Plan - For the long term it is expected that tested courses of study, effective methods of instruction, tested techniques of recruitment and student retention, reliable and varied methods of evaluation and concrete measures of program effectiveness in terms of better lives for the underpriviledged will emerge, and be thoroughly documented for use throughout the State of California...

In its development, the Calirornia plan establishes procedures and policies for the development of a comprehensive program on the state level for the promotion, approval, funding, operation and evaluation of school district projects.

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[18] Ibid.

[19] California State Department of Education, California Plan for Adult Basic Education, (Sacramento, 1964), p.2.

New Jersey

New Jersey has established College Resource Centers for Adult Education which are expected to play a key role in helping to raise the educational level of adults by:[20]

1. Making available to educational institutions, resource centers, community groups, and interested persons, a program for designated teachers to establish competency in teaching and counseling adults.

2. Making available consultant services in adult education.

3. Establishing a library and information center for adult education materials, both curricular and instructional.

4. Reviewing and evaluating curricular materials for continuing education.

5. Planning for college courses which will include adult education methods and materials which could be offered at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

6. Conducting special activities directed at the improvement of resources and the training of the teachers who would be involved in adult education programs.

7. Providing evaluative services for determining the effectiveness of programs.

8. Conducting research programs into methods and materials of adult education.

Florida

The State of Florida has developed a comprehensive plan for adult and continuing education and has published a variety of curriculum guides to support various phases of this program. In addition, Florida State University

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[20]New Jersey Department of Education, statement, March 1966 (in ECCO files)

has developed a program for training educators in the methods of adult education.

Dr. George Aker of the School of Education at Florida State reports:[21]

> We...are developing a proposal to establish a community counseling and guidance center for adults which will involve computer programming to assist the counselor in selecting with the adult client the combination of community programs and opportunities which would most effectively enable the client to achieve his goals or satisfy his educational needs. We see the adult counseling and guidance center as a community agency that would not be connected with any established agency within the community, but one which would be knowledgeable about all so that it might work effectively with a total range of organizations and institutions that are available for adult education within the community. Such a center would not only serve as a clearinghouse of information and a center for guidance and counseling, but would also establish on a day-to-day basis the range of adult education needs and opportunities which are either available or needed in the particular community.

Louisiana

Vermillion Parish inaugurated a program to attract the functional illiterates of the parish to adult basic education classes during the period of October 1964 through June 1965. The target audience were those persons over 19 years of age who had not completed high school. As a result, the number of adult classes in the parish rose from 5 to 26 and enrollments rose from 89 to 410.[22]

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[21]George F. Aker, Florida State University, Tallahassee, April 21, 1967, letter, (in ECCO files).

[22]Joseph C. Kite, The Effect of a Concerted Parishwide Expansion Effort Utilizing a Variety of Novel Methods and Techniques on Enrollment in the Vermillion Parish Adult Academic Education Program, (Louisiana, 1965).

C. New York State Programs

The State Education Department, in cooperation with the Department of Social Welfare, has developed a Welfare-Education Plan through which school districts will be reimbursed with state and federal funds expended to operate literacy and basic education programs for adults who are public welfare recipients. The program is intended to assist adults who need and can profit from such education. In addition, the Bureau of Basic Continuing Education of the State Education Department has established programs throughout the state under the Economic Opportunity Act. Under this program, Learning Centers have been established in several cities to conduct research in adult basic education.

One learning center is located in the former Washington Irving School in Syracuse, New York and may be considered as typical of the other centers. The program in the Syracuse Learning Center is operated on two levels: day school and evening school. Day school students are drawn from regular adult basic education day school classes after referral as an individual requiring remediation or acceleration for a specific skill. The student is assigned a study space and is provided access to instructional materials which he uses on an individual basis.

Evening school students are divided into three groups for research purposes. Group 1 students receive 80 minutes of conventional instruction per class. Group 2 students receive 40 minutes of conventional instruction and 40 minutes of individual instruction using programmed and other self-directed materials.

Group 3 students receive 80 minutes of self-directed instruction per class period. Participating students range from 18 years to middle age with initial reading level scores of from third grade to sixth grade. Results of initial tests, tests after 50 hours and tests after 100 hours, are expected to measure the effectiveness of the various approaches.

A number of school districts have initiated adult basic education programs, of which New York City's is the most extensive. One example should be mentioned. The Experimental Booklet Project, established in New York City in 1963, involved the preparation of effective teaching materials. The purpose of the project was intended to "develop effective materials which would help adult students adjust to changing conditions in New York". It also involved training in the ability to write current meaningful information in a language format suitable for student use.

D. Other Programs in Material Development

Several agencies or organizations, not previously mentioned, are also preparing materials or operating programs of literacy training. These include the Adult Education Association of the U.S.A., the Diebold Literacy Project, the Literacy Volunteers of Syracuse, New York, and the National Association for Public School Adult Education.

The Library for Continuing Education, Syracuse University, has been established to provide a clearinghouse for materials in adult basic education. The Library also houses the ERIC Center on Adult Education. The Center for Applied Linguistics has established its Literacy Clearinghouse for the same purpose.

The Job Corps Centers established under the Economic Opportunity Act have assumed the responsibility of preparing materials for use in their programs. Accordingly, the Job Corps has employed a private research group to evaluate existing material, to prepare new material and to evaluate these materials both within and without the Job Corps program.

E. Evaluation Studies

Greenleigh Associates, under a contract from the United States Office of Education, has evaluated the effectiveness of five adult basic education reading programs in California, New Jersey and New York. Several of their conclusions were pertinent:[23]

1. There was no significant difference in student gain scores in the different reading systems during the 17-week period of the study.

2. The achievement and intelligence tests used lacked validity and reliability for the adult population studies. The tests were niether geared to the knowledge base of the students nor standardized with the population.

3. When more than one agency is involved in cooperative research, coordination does not occur spontaneously. A third party is necessary to bring the cooperating agencies together, to maintain communications and to assure that time schedules are kept.

Greenleigh Associates recommended:[24]

1. All reading systems should be substantially improved and adapted to the needs of disadvantaged adults.

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[23] Greenleigh Associates, Inc., Field Test and Evaluation of Selected Adult Basic Education Systems, (New York: 1966), p. 15.

[24] Ibid., p. 17

2. Better supplementary materials should be developed, especially in arithmetic, social studies, health and the world of work.

3. Instructional materials should not talk down to the students and should be devised for adult students at below fifth grade reading levels and extended through the eighth grade.

4. New achievement and intelligence tests should be developed that are applicable to the educationally and economically deprived adult.

The conclusions drawn from a study at the Northern Illinois University are also pertinent. Although no significant difference was noted between groups using commercially produced materials and groups using teacher-produced materials, evaluations by participants indicated:

1. Teachers who preferred commercially developed materials at the beginning of the study came to prefer materials they designed and produced themselves.

2. The most valuable teaching technique was the development of materials by the teacher in cooperation with the students based upon student interest and experience.[25]

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[25]Wesley A. Maury and R. W. Burnett, Illinois Journal of Education, September 1966.

IV. The Need for Adult Basic Education Materials

The attack on adult illiteracy involves three approaches: the development of effective teachers through teacher training programs; the development of willing students through community action programs; and, the development of effective materials. The development of materials depends, in turn, upon four steps:

1. The investigation of needs and possibilities,
2. The preparation of materials in various media,
3. The evaluation of materials in controlled situations, and
4. The dissemination of these tested materials.

The need for tested materials has been expressed frequently in recent years by officials concerned with literacy throughout the world. Professor Jean Piaget, director of the International Bureau of Education, speaking at the Geneva Conference on "The Organization of Educational Research" in July, 1966, said, "Research is indispensible for perfecting new methods and for verifying the results of education".[26] Hadi Heyati, Minister of Education of Iran, echoed these words by stating, "Today educationists and economists the world over agree that no progress can be achieved unless the economic program is preceded or accompanied by integrated educational planning".[27]

The 1962 Kenya workshop sponsored by UNESCO addressed the question of the need for more reading materials for the improvement of reading ability,

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[26] School and Society, December 10, 1966, p. 461.

[27] Ibid., p. 461

entertainment, the provision of useful information, the teaching of skills and techniques, the introduction of new ideas, the formation of attitudes and opinions, and the development of judgement. The workshop report stated:[28]

> Adult literacy campaigns should not be launched until there is an adequate and continuing output of attractive and interesting reading matter available for those who have learned to read and have attained different levels of literacy.

During a conference of the Government Advisory Committee on International Book Programs in July 1966, Henry Thomassen of the McGraw-Hill Publishing Corporation had the following suggestions concerning international involvement,[29]

> Establish large teacher training programs aimed at the illiteracy problem which would prepare teachers to teach reading on several levels...and to both children and adults. Coincident with this, establish study teams to develop instructional materials that are culturally suitable for the respective regions where the illiteracy rate is high.

He also suggested,

> Knowledgeable foreign language educators in elementary schools, as well as members of the Peace Corps, could work with publishers and a group of their Latin American counterparts to produce materials.

Lee Deighton of the Macmillan Company added that,[30]

> The State Department could perform a great service by underwriting a basic reading program which could be adapted to the varying cultures and backgrounds of disadvantaged people.

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[28]UNESCO, Report on the Workshop in Kenya (Addis Abada, 1962), Chapter VII, Paragraph 23.

[29]Delia Goetz, Report on the Conference of the Government Advisory Committee on International Book Programs, January 1966. (Typescript).

[30]Ibid.

Other particpants at the conference urged the use of periodicals as an important means for providing educational materials, for attracting and developing local writers and as a source of recreational reading.

The USOE Guidelines for Research and Development on Adult and Continuing Education lists three proposed priority areas for development: participants, process and content. Of content in basic education the Guidelines state,[31]

> In addition to learning how to read and write, the illiterate adult must also be provided with the fundamentals of arithmetic, science, economics, health and sanitation and social skills...Evaluation of various types of programs already in use will be valuable in building more adequate curricula in basic education. Research and development is also needed to insure better articulation between instruction in literacy skills and in job skills - for example, through the use of tutorial, remedial, small group and team teaching methods.

The 1964 Report of the Task Force on Adult Basic Education Instructional Materials and Related Media suggests the lack of suitable instructional materials as being,

a critical problem. The Report states,[32]

> There is now, and will be increasingly in the future, a tremendous market for a comprehensive system of ABE materials. These materials must be "teacher-proof" inasmuch as they will be used by teachers who have had limited training in teaching adults. The materials should be available at low cost and based on adult life roles and the ecology of education.

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[31]USOE, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Guidelines for Research and Development on Adult and Continuing Education, July 1966, Paragraph 7.

[32]USOE, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Report of the Task Force on Adult Basic Education Instructional Materials and Related Media, 1964.

Edward W. Brice in reporting to the Cherry Hill Conference in January, 1966, stated[33]

> Related disciplines and professional competency must be brought together, both in and out of government, to conduct research and development programs leading towards a development of a system of materials to the ABE job.... (The USOE) strongly urges that a system of materials be developed and teams be assembled consisting of an adult education specialist, a a reading specialist, a linguist, an educational psychologist and a vocational educator. These teams would first define in specific behavioral terms those skills and knowledge to be introduced in the series. Then they would plan a system of instruction... Following this preliminary planning, material should be developed, adopted in sequence and field tested.

Arno Jewett spoke at the same Conference concerning the lack of materials which give a realistic picture of life for culturally and educationally disadvantaged populations and recommended that,[34]

1. New printed materials should be developed to teach adults enrolled in ABE courses.

2. Material should achieve at least three basic purposes:
   a. Give adults a foundation in reading or written expression and arithmetic.

   b. Upgrade basic reading, writing and arithmetic skills of adults to senior high school level.

   c. Prepare adults for semi-skilled jobs.

3. Surveys should be made (before materials are developed), of adults who could profit by basic courses.

4. After materials are prepared in draft they should be field-tested and revised.

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[33] Report of the Cherry Hill Conference, jointly sponsored by the USOE and the American Textbook Publishers Institute, P. 26. (Offset).

[34] Ibid., pp. 21-22.

Austin J. McCaffery, Director of the Textbook Publisher's Institute, listed five possible steps for cooperation between publishers and school systems:[35]

1. Definition of goals,
2. Procurement of knowledgeable authors,
3. Utilization of editorial personnel in publishing houses,
4. Presentation and interpretation of new materials to teachers and supervisors, and,
5. Evaluation of materials.

In describing curriculum research, McCaffery cited 20 commissions at work in the areas of English and social studies and said,[36]

> It appears timely that...liaison be established with the various study groups to assure the fullest cooperation in the sharing and utilization of their research.

He then suggested that the questions which still need to be answered include:

1. Who are the disadvantaged?
2. How should they be organized for instruction?
3. What role will the traditional educational agencies play?
4. What part can industry, labor, voluntary organizations, and various other agencies play?
5. Who should do the teaching and training?
6. What government educational experience is applicable to the communities?

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[35] Ibid., p. 15.

[36] Ibid., p. 17-18.

7. What school experience is valuable for wider adoption?

8. What types of educational materials have been proved useful?

9. Is there an up-to-date directory listing types of ABE programs?

Max Goodson of McGraw-Hill urged a massive national program:[37]

> We need the creation of....arbitrarily fixed centers over the U.S. associated with universities...There have been some remarkable research breakthroughs recently that open up a tremendous vista for us...
>
> We have to rethink what is the potential of these people. We've got to approach these people as persons who have potential. Therefore we have to change our technology and our approach... This is the sort of thing that needs to go on - research and development in a number of centers well financed by the government. We need to bring together content and skill specialists, behavioral scientists and teachers in associated schools and agencies serving the other agencies serving the other educators. And I would hope...that publishers need to have a role in this sort of thing.

Mr. Goodson also urged the consolidation of efforts with an emphasis on the community approach. Diversification of approaches, he said, is needed; diversification regarding the psychological nature of the learner, diversification regarding material elements of the system approach to teaching, and diversification of technology not limited to books.

A number of educators have written concerning these same points. Paul Berg, for example, has said,[38]

> The immediate need seems to be that of a professional evaluation of methods used in an attempt to eliminate

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[37] Ibid., p. 60.

[38] Paul C. Berg, op. cit., p. 54.

> illiteracy. Only after results can be proved and programs modified to fit the findings will there be unqualified support and ample funds that are necessary to make such programs of the scope of the present literacy movement in the southeast (United States) an unqualified success.

George Aker of Florida State University has analyzed the lack of research related to the curricula of public school adult education programs and underlines the importance of evaluation in the determination of success and failure. He said,[39]

> It can only be carried out when educational objectives are clearly defined in terms of behavioral output; control groups are established to reduce the effect of confounding variables on learning performances; adequate pre-tests and reliable and valid evaluative criteria are established.

Although the technology of evaluation has advanced rapidly, Aker said,

> Research shows that adult educators feel a greater lack of competence in the area of evaluation than in practically any other area of professional responsibility... It is certain that very few agencies the size of public school adult education could afford the luxury of so little basic and applied research and remain in business very long... Every adult school should have a program of continuous research and evaluation designed to increase the effectiveness of existing and future programs.

Aker has suggested that the first problems which need resolution in a nationwide adult basic education program are,[40]

> There is the general question of developing an organizational structure which will provide for both centralization and decentralization in such a way as to:
>
> 1. Bring about the most efficient and effective possible use of existing and potential resources at the local, state, regional and national levels.

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[39] George F. Aker and William L. Carpenter, What Research Says about Public School Adult Education, (Tallahassee: Florida State University School of Education, November 1, 1966), (Mimeographed) p. 21.

[40] George F. Aker, Op. cit., p. 4.

2. Provide for rapid dissemination and exchange of knowledge that is pertinent to the development and improvement of ABE programs.

3. Encourage experiementation and innovation and the widespread application of sound and tested practices.

4. Make possible a variety of evaluations and comparative studies that will help eliminate ineffective practices, identify effective ones, uncover important research needs, and provide measures of progress and accomplishment.

5. Provide means for program identification and status on the part of professional and lay personnel, the general public and the specific publics served (clientele) that will be commensurate with the importance of the goals of ABE.

6. Overcome the disadvantages frequently inherent in a "crash program" which are manifested by poor coordination, inefficient operations, internal conflicts, external epticism and criticism and related proofs to the "haste makes waste" adage.

Organization to achieve the foregoing six objectives must be based upon viewing adult basic education as both a field of practice and a field of study... As a field of study we need to discover;...improve adult education methodologies; and (produce) more adequate materials...

Aker concludes by saying,

Certain agencies, such as professional associations, public libraries, public schools and community colleges are strategically located to serve a clearinghouse function which will help insure the rapid dissemination of useful information and the avoidance of unnecessary duplication of effort.

V. Adult Basic Education Development and Distribution Center

There is a pressing need for the establishment of an adult basic education center for the development and distribution of materials for adult literacy programs. The U.S. Office of Education is greatly concerned with the present duplication of effort and the lack of coordination, particularly between state departments of education. USOE is considering the establishment of regional distribution centers for adult basic education materials and is receptive to proposals for such projects.

The two concerns, development and distribution, could be planned as functions of one center. Even though the application for funds might be separate, provisions could be made for the melding of the operations once the funds were granted.

The two functions of such a center could be described as:

Development - investigation, preparation, evaluation and dissemination of information initially for consumption within the United States but eventually for underdeveloped countries.

Distribution - materials prepared by state education departments and local school districts as well as materials produced by non-profit educational organizations.

The two functions are mutually supporting in that the materials which might be developed by a regional center would be available for distribution through the center. The distribution function would in no way supercede the efforts presently being made for the distribution of information through established libraries of continuing education.

The U.S. Office of Education has established guidelines for the establishment of research centers such as the one described. The procedures which are set up are significant.

> Research and Development Centers...concentrate on a single area of research interest and may conduct activities ranging from basic research through dissemination of findings and products. Thus inter-related activities can reinforce each other; promising leads from one activity can be immediately followed up in another; and research findings can quickly be put into practice. Each center is inter-disciplinary and ordinarily maintains cooperative relationships with state departments of education, local school districts, universities and teacher training colleges and revelant non-profit organizations.
>
> The proposed activity must 1) show promise of making a contribution to the improvement of education, 2) have general (not purely local) applicability, and 3) be directed toward communicable results. Support may also be requested for the research component of a larger project.
>
> Grants or contracts may be awarded to colleges, universities, state departments of education, or to other public or private agencies, organizations, groups, or individuals after proposals have been reviewed.
>
> Proposals are evaluated according to these criteria:
>
> 1. Educational significance
> 2. Soundness of design or operational plan
> 3. Adequacy of personnel and facilities
> 4. Economic efficiency.
>
> Local projects must lead to findings significant for other settings. Innovative activities should lead to findings which can be communicated and applied. Evaluation of proposals... involves attention to the breadth of probably impact and capacity for continuous and effective contribution to educational improvement.[41]

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[41] George F. Aker, Op. cit., p. 4.

A number of area organizations are available which might contribute to the operation of an adult basic education center. These include:

The Library for Continuing Education, Syracuse University
The School of Journalism, Syracuse University
The School of Education, Syracuse University
The Central New York School Study Council
The Department of Social Science, Syracuse University
The Syracuse University Press
The Department of Education, LeMoyne College
WCNY-TV, educational television station
Literacy Volunteers
The Syracuse City School District
The State Education Department, State of New York

The School of Education, Syracuse University and the Department of Education, LeMoyne College, could assist the center in identifying qualified personnel for its operation. They could also support its programs by directing qualified graduate students into programs of advanced study in adult basic education.

The Library for Continuing Education is collecting materials on the teaching of adult education in the United States and serves as an ERIC clearinghouse for adult education. The Library could serve as a center for the collection of teaching materials.

The School of Journalism is offering a course in Techniques of Adult Literacy. It might serve as a source of editorial assistance for a development center.

The Central New York School Study Council would provide access to school districts throughout Central New York as well as information concerning adult illiteracy in its member schools. It might also provide access to other study councils in the United States.

The Syracuse University Press could provide an outlet for materials developed by a center.

WCNY-TV could serve as a means of disseminating information to the general public.

Literacy Volunteers, a local agency with a well developed literacy program, might provide a means of testing materials which are developed.

The Syracuse City School District would provide the test population for any field testing of materials.

The State Education Department would provide a means for coordination with other centers throughout the United States.

A number of other agencies are beginning to provide services which could be implemented through a distribution center. The NAPSAE is collecting adult basic education materials from state departments of education for bibliographic purposes. The materials indicated on these lists could be obtained by the center in bulk lots and distributed together with the materials held by the Library of Continuing Education.

The American Library Association Committee to Evaluate Adult Basic Education Materials has requested federal funds for its program. Evaluation of ABE materials undertaken by this organization could be disseminated through the center.

The Adult Education Association is establishing a Task Force on Poverty which will attempt to obtain and evaluate materials.

The Job Corps has begun a program in the production and evaluation of materials in conjunction with private organizations. Cooperation with this agency would assist in the identification of effective materials.

The Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, D.C., has begun a Literacy Clearinghouse for foreign materials which might be included in the collection housed in the center.

The Committee on World Literacy of the National Council of Churches is assisting in literacy programs throughout the world and might provide assistance in the development of materials as well as in their distribution.

The Laubach Literacy Center could also assist in international distribution of materials.

The United States government, through the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, has earmarked special funds for research related to the educational needs of countries faced with major problems of educational development. Since illiteracy is a critical problem, some of these funds will be used for research in basic education. AID is coordinating the work of various governmental agencies under the direction of Drs. Howard Vent and Clifford Block.

VI. CONCLUSION

The universal need for adult basic education is being recognized throughout the world. Although the number of functional illiterates in India dwarfs the number in the United States, the problem is greater in the United States considering how much greater are its human and financial resources. Much is being done to extend and improve adult basic education programs. Much remains to be done. One of the most challenging areas is in materials development and distribution.

The proposed center could carry out research and development projects involving the establishment of needs and possibilities, the creation of new materials, the evaluation of effectiveness of materials and the dissemination of information concerning this research. The center could also collect and distribute existing materials which are available from state departments of education and from other non-profit agencies and organizations.

The center, located in Syracuse, could work closely with educational and cultural agencies in the community and could coordinate their activities with those of other agencies in the state and throughout the country.

George Aker has stated, "I think that what you are doing is vitally necessary and extremely important and I hope that your efforts may serve as a prototype for the establishment of community adult education centers around the nation."[42]

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[42]Letter from George F. Aker, April 21, 1967. (In ECCO's files)

This sentiment was echoed by the Rev. Charles Hein when he said, "The contribution of the proposed center...could lie in...the development of methods of evaluating adult education (including literacy) programs and developing new programmed teaching methods. If methods and testing devices or materials can be worked up here which are inexpensive and scientifically reliable, these could then be adapted by educators of other countries to meet their needs. If the center could permit such educators to work here for a period of time, to adapt the materials under guidance of those who have used them locally, that of course would be good."[43]

The present need is for the establishment of a study group or task force which will establish the details of the operation of a center to include the operating philosophy and the potential sources of funding for the center.

ERIC Clearinghouse
JUL 16 1968
on Adult Education

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[43]Letter from the Rev. Charles T. Hein, Director, Togo Literacy Project for the Committee on World Literacy, December 14, 1966. (In ECCO's Files).

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